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Russian Attitude on Vessels for Red Cross Inspection

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Ambassador Yost informed me by telephone at noon that Narisimhan had been told by Morozov that the USSR:

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1. [REDACTED] Would not accept U.S. flag vessels for IRC inspection. Only Soviet or neutral vessels were acceptable. He did not know whether there were any Soviet vessels available but stated that Swedish ships would be agreeable. He rule out Latin American shipping on the grounds that the OAS was not neutral.

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2. Saw no reason why the Red Cross inspection should last more than 10 days since Russian removal of missiles, etc., would be completed at the end of that period.

3. Considered that the "hail and pass" procedure now being used by U.S. naval ships on quarantine station should be followed by the Red Cross ships.

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[REDACTED] (Narisimhan and Yost's preliminary estimate is that the Russian stand against the use of U.S. vessels is non-negotiable but that the suggestion on "hail and pass" is a try-on.)

Narisimhan also informed Yost that the UN had no news of the arrival in New York of any Red Cross official. The last word they had from Spinnelli was that he had informed Boissier of the IRC that Cuba had no objection to Red Cross inspection of incoming shipments.

Yost also reported some concern in the UN as to whether the Red Cross would agree to inspect other than Soviet ships bound for Cuba unless the governments whose flag they flew had explicitly agreed to such inspection. This would require the UN negotiating such agreements with other governments. Yost thought that a decision on our part to continue quarantine procedures for vessels of governments that had not agreed would speed the agreement process.

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